

United States Marine Corps  
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Marine Corps Combat Development Command  
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**American Policy in the Persian Gulf Region:  
Peace, Security, and the Spread of Democracy**

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**AUTHOR:**

Darin J. Fox  
Major USMC

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Mentor and Oral Defense Committee Member: PAUL D. KELPI, Jr.

Approved: [Signature]

Date: 5 MAY 2008

Oral Defense Committee Member: [Signature]

Approved: [Signature]

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

**Title:** American Policy in the Persian Gulf Region: Peace, Security, and the Spread of Democracy

**Author:** Major Darin J. Fox, United States Marine Corps

**Thesis:** To achieve lasting security in the Arabian Gulf region, US policy, though focused in Iraq, must engage Saudi Arabia and Iran with all of the instruments of national power to encourage the spread of democracy as a means to peace and prosperity within the region, as well as the world.

**Discussion:** Iraq, Saudi Arabia, and Iran makeup the three regional powers along the Persian Gulf. The Gulf region is important to the United States because of its resources, its strategic geography, its potential for crises and instability, and its centrality to the Muslim religion. The endstate of US policy in the Persian Gulf should be lasting peace and security encouraged by the spread of democracy throughout the region. Democracy does not mean a carbon copy of Western Europe or America. Democracy does mean, however, governments that are: representative; adherents to the rule of law; and protect the rights of minorities.

Iraq has the potential to be a regional leader as an emerging democracy. An American presence will continue in Iraq for the distant future to meet Iraqi security needs, as well as to provide US forces access to the region, which is central to maintaining America's predominant role in the Gulf. Iraq is a fundamental component of American strategy because it demonstrates America's commitment to freedom and security in the region. Maintaining America's partnership with a free Iraq, therefore, is essential to US policy in the Gulf.

Saudi Arabia is a long time partner for the United States in the region and in the Global War on Terror. The US government has little desire to see the Saudi regime replaced or removed from power. American engagement with Saudi Arabia must focus on economic development in addition to encouraging government reforms toward civil society and respect for human rights.

Iran is an important and complex part of US policy in the Gulf. Its regime seeks hegemony in the region at America's expense through exploiting its mineral wealth, limiting access to the Gulf, attempting to unhinge America's efforts in Iraq, and through nuclear proliferation. The policy options for America towards the Iranian regime boil down to three things: regime change, containment, and engagement. A measured engagement is the most likely to facilitate changing Iran's behavior by having the regime comply with non-proliferation of nuclear weapons, renunciation of terrorism, and the end to covert action in Iraq while deescalating tensions in the region and being acceptable to the American people.

**Conclusion:** It is necessary for the United States to look both in the near and the far term as it continues to shape and mold its policies in the Gulf region. The region's geographic, ideological, and economic significance means that decisions and actions taken today by America's leaders will have major consequences around the globe for decades to come. The long-term goal for the region is security and peace. To attain this goal, US policy must be balanced, feasible, and supportable for the United States and the global community. The spread of democracy is part of realizing the endstate of a free and prosperous Gulf region.

*Preface*

I would like to thank my family for their time and patience in my efforts to complete this project. I also want to express my appreciation to the staff of the Grey Research Center for help in conducting my research. Lastly, I would like thank the faculty and staff of the Marine Corps' Command and Staff College for their help and guidance.

## INTRODUCTION

*60 years of Western nations excusing and accommodating the lack of freedom in the Middle East did nothing to make us safe, because in the long run stability cannot be purchased at the expense of liberty*

-George W. Bush, 2003<sup>1</sup>

*If we can establish and spread the values of liberty, the rule of law, human rights, and an open society then that is in our national interest too.*

-Tony Blair, 1999<sup>2</sup>

The Persian Gulf region today may be thought of as a three-legged stool. The legs of the stool are the three largest countries in the region: Iraq, Saudi Arabia, and Iran. The stool's seat represents peace in the region. Sitting on the stool is the well being of the global community and its markets, of which the United States is an integral part. Unfortunately, the stool rests upon broken ground with three legs of different length, made of different materials, and affixed in a manner that support the stool's seat. The paradigm US policymakers must confront is how does the nation steady the stool so that the occupant will neither fall off when sitting down nor tip it over so that it is broken beyond repair. It is a multilayered problem. Policymakers need to decide whether they seek lasting security in the region or temporary regional stability. If stability is enough to satisfy America's interests, it is a nod towards containment and the status quo. Recent criticism points to this being the direction in which US policy is leaning.<sup>3</sup> If lasting peace and security is the desired endstate then US policy must encourage the spread of freely elected, representative governments throughout the region. Inherent in this discussion is the question of how much effort, in blood and treasure, is the United States willing to expend in the pursuit of either end? The latter endstate, lasting security, will likely require a great deal more expense in the short term, but potentially may result in considerable savings in the long run. To achieve lasting security in the Persian Gulf region, US policy, although focused in Iraq, must



engage Saudi Arabia and Iran with all instruments of national power to encourage the spread of democracy as a means to peace and prosperity not only within the region but also the world.

In examining each nation, there are a number of issues that must be considered: the nation's significance to the United States; the nation's role in the region, both historically and currently; the status of its current government; and the country's suitability for democratic government. Lastly, the policies that the United States should follow to facilitate regional security are recommended. Before discussing any specific country within the region, it is necessary to review why the Gulf region is so important to the United States. Oil is the obvious answer. Half of the world's known oil and natural gas reserves are located under the Gulf region.<sup>4</sup> Although new oil reserves have been discovered outside the region, these have not offset the exhaustion of older sources in a way to reduce the significance of the Gulf's reserves.<sup>5</sup> Alternate sources of energy are unlikely to significantly reduce the West's dependence on the Gulf's oil or petrochemicals before 2050.<sup>6</sup> Likewise, emerging economies, such as India and China, will greatly increase demand well into the second half of this century.<sup>7</sup>

Beyond oil, the region is strategically important to the United States for three significant reasons. The Gulf region's location, potential for economic instability, and its significance as the birthplace of the Islamic religion make it strategically important. As in the past, the Gulf nations still could have a major impact on the global trade routes through the Red Sea and the Indian Ocean. The region's geopolitical position means that conflict in the region could easily spillover into Europe or Asia. Within the region, rapid population growth has resulted in a *youth bulge*. In Saudi Arabia, for instance, over 70% of the population is under the age of 30.<sup>8</sup> This bulge is problematic because these young people are coming to age amidst multiple failing economies. Without promising opportunities they become a receptive audience for radicalization into

militant Totalitarian-Islamism. Militant Totalitarian-Islamism is the ideological basis for Al Qa'ida and other terrorist organizations that threaten the region and global security. Many of these groups wish to replace the current governments in the Gulf with Totalitarian-Islamist regimes. If this were to happen, the United States' security interest within the region and around the world would be seriously threatened.

In pursuing its interests, the United States must be true to its values of freedom and democracy. The current Bush administration's policy has been to foster and support the creation of democratic governments within the region as a way to establish lasting peace and security.<sup>9</sup> Although this may seem like a consistent policy aim, the current strategy is a departure from the realism of the Nixon and Clinton administrations that often overlooked it for the sake of expediency. It is important to understand that democracy in the Gulf region will not look like the democracies in Western Europe or in the United States, but certain fundamental principles have to be present for a nation to be truly democratic. The government must be representative and responsive to its population. The rule of law is essential for a democracy to succeed. Rule of law protects and preserves a democratic system of government. It protects minorities from the tyranny of the majority and it is a basis for a vibrant, market economy.

Beyond these fundamental requirements, democracy in the Gulf region must be acceptable within the context of a country's Islamic community and its interpretations of the writings and traditions of the Islamic religion. Multiple interpretations exist in every Muslim country. An important group in shaping the views of the people is the religious scholars and leaders known as the *'ulama*.<sup>10</sup> The *'ulama* and the Muslim that follow them may be divided in to three groups: traditional-Islamists, modernist-Islamists, and secularists.<sup>11</sup> Modernist-Islamists may be thought of as mainstream Islamist. They are people who believe that the *shari'a* is a

source of law rather than *the* source of law as traditional-Islamists do.<sup>12</sup> Religion will play a more significant role in any democracy in the Gulf region than it does in the West. If a government fails to satisfy the requirements of its Muslim population then it will lack a great deal of legitimacy.

Legitimacy for any government is derived from five basic sources: tradition; ideology; personality; eudemonic; and democratic.<sup>13</sup> In the West, it is accepted that if a people elect their government, it will be considered legitimate, but for a democracy to succeed the people must value both democratic *norms* and *institutions*. Democratic norms are those values that are typical of democracies such as tolerance for minorities and respect for human rights. Democratic institutions refer to such things as voting, multiple parties and transparent government.<sup>14</sup> Moataz Fattah recently surveyed Muslims from around the world to determine their acceptance of these mores and institutions by country. Fattah found the Muslims from around the world had varying degrees of acceptance of democratic values based on a wide number of variables from gender to experience with democracy.<sup>15</sup> One of the main impediments to democracy in the region is the incumbent rulers who do not want to lose power.<sup>16</sup> If democracy is primarily hindered by existing, repressive regimes, then it can be speculated that Iraq, with its oppressive ruler removed, should be the first country in the Gulf to embrace democracy.

## IRAQ

After the removal of Saddam Hussein's regime in 2003, the United States determined to establish a democracy in Iraq. That democracy has not proved to be an easy task to establish. Instead, it has cost vast amounts of people and resources. There must be a compelling reason to incur the high cost of nurturing a fledgling democracy in a place where democracy has had such a poor reception in the past. For Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice indicated in 2006, leaving the

region in the hands of tyrants was something the United States could not do.<sup>17</sup> Despite the eagerness of some officials to abandon Iraq and America's moral responsibility to rebuild what it broke,<sup>18</sup> Iraq's people, resources, and history make it too important to leave in the mercurial hands of another dictator. Iraq is America's best hope for democracy in the region. Iraq represents a potential strategic partner in the region dedicated to the ideas of liberty and security.

Historically, Iraq was a cultural and administrative center of the Muslim and Arab world for over 500 years.<sup>19</sup> Today Iraq has the chance to be a regional leader again as an emerging democracy. This is not to say that democracy's success in Iraq is assured, but there appears to be some evidence that Iraqis are willing to accept and maintain a democratic system of governance despite the continuing sectarian violence that plagues the country. Some scholars have indicated that Iraq will fail because the British created it after World War I and that the people have no sense of an *Iraqi* identity.<sup>20</sup> Yet, as early as 1920, Iraqis were writing and speaking of Iraqi nationalism in a response to efforts to separate southern Iraq from the rest of the nation.<sup>21</sup> During the Iran-Iraq war, Iraq's predominately Shi'a army did not hesitate to fight their fellow Shi'a from Iran.<sup>22</sup> Ethnicity appears to hold more sway religion. Recent indications are that Iraqis are beginning to work together in the army and in government. The Iraqis seem to be accepting of democratic institutions. Although turnout for the first major elections in January 2005 was relatively low owing the Sunni boycott of the election, elections late in 2005 drew the vast majority of Iraqis to the polls despite the continued violence.<sup>23</sup> Fattah found that Iraqis actually have a higher sense of tolerance towards their fellow countrymen than people in Indonesia, Syria, or Kuwait and he cites a 2005 survey of Iraqi university students in which 60% considered democracy the most preferred form of government.<sup>24</sup>

In recent years, a great deal of thought has gone towards how Iraq's democracy should look. From Washington to Baghdad, leaders have been espousing a loose confederation of three semi-autonomous states. The Kurds have made overtures towards greater autonomy but the recent incursion into northern Iraq by Turkish troops should have made the weakness of a separate Kurdish state apparent to everyone.<sup>25</sup> Such an arrangement would not be a long-term recipe for a successful democracy. This system would fall apart, probably after a civil war with regional implications. The most likely choice for a sustainable democracy will be a federal republic with a three-way sharing of power between the Sunni, Shi'a, and Kurdish groups. A federal republic would allow for a strong central government capable of maintaining internal defense and providing services equitably. In its early stages the federal government will require a strong, central authority. The national leader has to be seen as someone that is respected by both friend and foe. The leader has to establish order while allowing Iraqi a sense of prosperity. The al-Maliki government's continuing efforts to suppress Shi'a militias in southern Iraq is aimed at showing its increasing strength compared to its rivals.

Although authoritarian in nature, the Iraqi government needs a representative assembly. Representative power in the national government should rest with the provinces to avoid a continual Shi'a majority. Without such a structure, minorities would have little incentive to work within the legal confines of the government in this case.

Along with establishing the proper governmental structures, Iraqis must work to create a properly functioning economy. Iraq's reconstruction and development needs to be guided towards establishing an economy that is balanced and self-sufficient. Oil will be important to reconstructing Iraq but Iraq cannot become another *petro*-state in the region dependant on oil money to buy-off its people's acquiescence. Basing a nation's future on a single, fluctuating

commodity can be quite hazardous. Instead, Iraq must utilize its oil wealth to be agriculturally self-sufficient, particularly in regards to grain staples. Unlike much of the region, Iraq is blessed with sufficient fresh water and arable land. Iraq has the potential to be net-exporter of foodstuffs. Next, Iraq's education system needs to be rejuvenated with a focus on training to make Iraqi workers competitive on the global market. Unlike certain countries in the region, Iraqi Arabs seem willing and able to work in all the fields necessary to give their country a thriving economy, from the humblest of tasks to more technical work. Saddam's policy of secularization, albeit forcibly enacted, of education and women's rights has set the stage for modernization.<sup>26</sup> Then, Iraq must build back its industrial base to reduce its reliance on the developed world for commercial goods.<sup>27</sup>

Before economic development can truly bloom, antigovernment elements within Iraq must be marginalized to the point that violence can be effectively managed by law enforcement and not require military force. Once this requirement is met, the new Iraqi government has to work towards encouraging foreign investment. A vital step in attracting investors is to guarantee that property and capital will not be nationalized while allowing international corporations the ability to compete locally. Such a guarantee will only be believed if it comes from a government that is stable and dedicated to the rule of law. The Iraqi government will have to be transparent to prevent corruption and the crony capitalism that so prevalent in the developing world.<sup>28</sup> The United States must continue its aid and guidance as the Iraqi economy continues to grow and become self-sufficient. America must be Iraq's lead advocate for conducting and encouraging investment and support for Iraq from around the world.

For the immediate future, America's role in Iraq will be focused on the military's support of internal defense. It is a commitment that will require a long-term presence by the US military.

Although both Iraqis and Americans have stated that there will be no permanent US bases in the country,<sup>29</sup> it is likely that US forces will have an enduring presence within Iraq well into this century. This presence will not only facilitate security in Iraq but security throughout the region. For the Iraqis, the presence of US forces lends security and legitimacy to the government in Baghdad. It is for this reason that they are working to come to a long-term agreement with either the United States.<sup>30</sup> Failing that, Iraqi officials have stated that they will seek an extension to the United Nations' mandate under which coalition forces operate in an effort to ensure American forces remain in Iraq to support the government.<sup>31</sup>

Diplomatically, American advisors have to continue to guide Iraq's fledgling democracy in an effort to protect it from the many of the pitfalls encountered by emerging governments as it works to meet the expectations of its people. One such pitfall is the tendency for new democracies to be belligerent. Allowing Iraq to follow such a path would be counterproductive to regional security. Rather, American diplomacy needs to support Iraqi efforts to develop a constitution that facilitates national reconciliation, democratic values, and national unity.

America can and should expect a return on its large investment. Partnering with Iraq will facilitate American access to the Gulf that is key to maintaining America's role in the Gulf. Specifically, Iraq allows the US land forces access to the region that is not dependent on Iranian controlled shipping lanes.<sup>32</sup> In fact, without access to Iraq, America's preeminent political position in the Gulf could be severely diminishing. It is necessary for the United States to treat Iraq as a partner and not as a client. In this way, America will improve that most lamented instrument of nation power, information. Iraq's future is the message that America's allies and enemies alike will hear loud and clear. America's actions in support of that future will convey the message. On the one hand, that message could be one of untrustworthiness, democracy's

failings, and weakness that would embolden America's adversaries, limit the United States' access to the region, and severely hinder America's policies for lasting peace in the region. On the hand, that message could be one of strength, steadfast friendship, concern for the welfare of the region's inhabitants, and the value of liberty that would bolster by America's partners in the region and aid the spread of democracy and security.

## SAUDI ARABIA

Iraq's large neighbor to the south, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, is another important part of America's policy for security in the region. Apart from its oil and strategic location, Saudi Arabia, as the birthplace of the prophet Muhammad and Islam, is essential for long-term peace in the region. Saudi Arabia also gave rise to the *Wahhabi*<sup>33</sup> movement that ascribes to a fundamentalist form of Islam. Wahhabism, which has been supported by the Saudi regime and vice versa for centuries, has inspired radical totalitarian-Islamist.<sup>34</sup> Totalitarian-Islamism is the ideology behind many terrorist groups including Al Qa'ida. Al Qa'ida's ideology of hate and terror has been spread worldwide by madrasas and missionaries supported by Saudi oil wealth.<sup>35</sup> After the attack of September 11, 2001, many pointed an accusatory finger towards the Kingdom.<sup>36</sup> Saudi Arabia has not been unscathed by totalitarian-Islamism. The Saudi regime fought a three-year civil war for its existence against radical totalitarian-Islamists in which many terrorist leaders have been either captured or killed.<sup>37</sup>

Expectedly, US policy towards the Saudi regime is shaped by Saudi Arabia's role in the *Global War on Terror*. The US government has little desire to see the Saudi leadership replaced or removed from power. Even if the US government did have such a desire, the Saudi regime has proven itself quite resilient. The Saudi monarchs maintain their legitimacy on several grounds including tradition, ideology, and eudemony. The unbroken Su'ud line can be traced



back to the founding of the original emirate in the eighteenth century.<sup>38</sup> Ideologically, they portray themselves, with the support of the Saudi *'ulama*, as the guardians of true Islam.<sup>39</sup> Providing government jobs, schools and welfare subsidies to their people have created eudemonic legitimacy.<sup>40</sup> The Saudi people do not necessarily see a need to change their government because the royal family provides order and justice while being responsive and accessible to the people.<sup>41</sup> As such, the Saudis have made very little movement towards democracy although they have recently taken some steps, mostly in economics, to liberalize the country including a number of legal steps to attract foreign investment. These reforms have moved the government towards greater transparency with protections of foreign property and reductions in unfair penalties against international corporations.<sup>42</sup> Some local elections have also been allowed for provincial assemblies, but officials that are appointed by the King always offset these.<sup>43</sup>

These reforms have all been led by the elites of the royal family.<sup>44</sup> The lack of participation of lower levels of Saudi society is indicative of a lack of acceptance of democracy among average Saudis. The Fattah study also reveals undemocratic tendencies among Saudis. As seen in Figure 3, Saudi Arabia's people are the least accepting of democratic values and institutions of any Muslim country<sup>45</sup>. The lack of acceptance is attributable to the prevalence of Wahhabism, which stresses the role of the Qur'an in government and intolerance for other religions.<sup>46</sup> The lack of democratic values and suppression by the regime means that what opposition groups that have arisen have predominantly been Islamist and totalitarian.<sup>47</sup> Conventional wisdom, and in large part the Saudi regime's reason to disallow democracy, is that if elections were held the Islamist would win and abolish the democratic institutions that bring them to power.<sup>48</sup>

In the area of supporting further democratic reforms within Saudi Arabia, a successful Iraqi democracy would give the average Saudi tangible proof that Arabs can set aside religious differences to embrace and prosper in a democratic system. By creating a bottom-up acceptance of democratic values and institutions, the top-down reforms can be enacted in a way that does not threaten the existence of the King in Saudi Arabia;<sup>49</sup> reform not revolution is most likely to lead to democratic successes in the Kingdom. If democracy does not appear as it will bring prosperity and civil order, then the Saudi people will have little reason desire a change in the status quo.

Because of the conservative nature of the Saudi people reforms must be in accordance with *shari'a* and *fiqh* (Islamic jurisprudence). The royal family is unlikely to abdicate its role in government as those of Europe have. Instead, it will likely remain as the executive branch of the government with a power sharing arrangement with a Consultative Assembly. Such an assembly already exists but is basically powerless. The reformed assembly will not so much as legislate as recommend decrees for the King to sign into action in line with the Muslim concept of *shura*. It will likely be made up of both elected and appointed officials, including members of both Sunni and Shi'a *'ulama*. To ensure it has a real role in the government, it will have to be the sole source to recommend decrees (so that the King cannot propose and enact law without the Assembly's consent).<sup>50</sup> The Assembly would also have to approve judges nominated by the King to make the judiciary truly independent.

American policy should continue to work with and support the Saudi regime. Militarily, the United States' role is limited to collective security and technical support.<sup>51</sup> Economically, the United States must continue to support and aid the Saudis in their economic development. America should encourage the Saudis to redirect oil revenues into internal and regional

investment, specifically into Iraq. Such investment would serve to strengthen interdependence and security within the region. Diplomatically, America and its western allies have to continue their engagement with Saudi Arabia on the issues of human rights and civil society. The Saudi government must take back the education system from the *'ulama* which for decades has taught Wahhabism and the Qur'an without preparing their students to be competitive in a global market.<sup>52</sup> Raised under the strictures of Wahhabism and unable to find work they are a ready pool of military age males for recruitment by terrorist organizations. Conversely, the United States must support and encourage the Saudi Arabian government to continue expanding its role in the region. In recent years, Saudi foreign policy has changed considerably. Within the last year Saudi Arabia has publicly denounced Hezbollah's war against Israel while declaring support for the Sunni government in Lebanon; King 'Abdallah has worked to achieve an intra-Arab ceasefire in Palestine while attempt to draw Hamas way from Iranian influence.<sup>53</sup> While democracy in Iraq continues to bloom, Saudi Arabia's increasing role as a voice for more mainstream Islamists and Arabs is a strong deterrent against both totalitarian-Islamists and the rising power of Iran.

## IRAN

Iran is the biggest threat to regional security in the Gulf.<sup>54</sup> The adversarial relationship with Iran makes it particularly complex problem for US policymakers. The Iranians are an ancient people with a desire and an expectation to be a regional power. With significant resources<sup>55</sup> and strategic territory, Iran's regime seeks to expand its position and role in the region at the expense of the United States. Its assertions of regional power are borne out of continual drive for regime self-preservation. Iran is keenly aware of large American military

forces on both its east and west borders<sup>56</sup> while it suffers from economic, cultural, and political instability at home.

Currently, the regime is pursuing a number of policies aimed at offsetting US presence in the Gulf. First, it is leveraging its mineral wealth to pay for its policy programs and better its position diplomatically. It has signed a number of trade agreements with Russia, China, and India to supply them with oil and natural gas.<sup>57</sup> Second, Iran maintains its ability to limit access to the Gulf by controlling the Straits of Hormuz. To demonstrate this ability Iran has instigated a number of confrontations between Iranian aircraft and vessels and US naval ships transiting the straits. Most recently, in early January 2008, three high-speed Iranian gunboats approached within a few hundred yard of a group of American ships that nearly resulted in an armed exchange.<sup>58</sup> Third, Iran is trying to unhinge America's efforts in Iraq. This effort has included arms, advisors, and a haven for Shiite insurgents.<sup>59</sup> Tehran's interests would certainly be served by drawing Iraq, or separate a Shi'a state, into its sphere of influence. Iran is certainly not squeamish about recruiting, supporting, and utilizing surrogates like Syria and Hezbollah in the pursuit of its policy objectives. Fourth, the issue of nuclear proliferations continues to loom over Iran's relations with its neighbors and the United States despite the recent National Intelligence Estimate (NIE) that states that Iran suspended its nuclear weapons program in 2003.<sup>60</sup> Given the Iranian regime's rhetoric, its access to delivery systems (see Figure 2),<sup>61</sup> and past failures of the US intelligence community it would be unwise for America to discount Iran's nuclear ambitions.

Before exploring potential US policy options, it is necessary to consider the multi-faceted legitimacy of Iran's government. The Supreme Leader, Ayatollah Khamene'i has ideological legitimacy based on the portrayal of him as an ascetic, spiritual scholar, and the highest religious

authority within the Shi'a sect of Islam.<sup>62</sup> Iran's regime is also able to maintain a degree of democratic legitimacy.

Unlike other countries in the region, Iran is a functioning republic. Iran holds multi-party elections at the local and nation level.<sup>63</sup> Theoretically, as seen in Figure 4, power flows from the electorate.<sup>64</sup> The reality of power in Iran is closer to that represented by Figure 5, which shows power flowing out from the Supreme Leader, *Faqih* (jurist)<sup>65</sup>. Once elected by the Assembly of Experts,<sup>66</sup> the *Faqih* rules for life with the power to dictate military, internal, and foreign policy.<sup>67</sup> Although certain tiny minorities such as Christians, Jews, and Zoroastrians have designated seats in the national assembly, there are not any real protections for minorities.<sup>68</sup> After hardliners took control of the national assembly for the reformists in 2005, many of the defeated party, even those who had won assembly seats, were arrested and jailed.<sup>69</sup>

Policy options for America boil down to three things: regime change, containment, and engagement. Regime change is probably the least preferred and least likely policy option. Potentially, regime change could result from internal or external sources. The ability of the United States to incite an internal revolution is unlikely. The accusation that any group in Iran is in collusion with the CIA is often a catastrophic event for any movement amongst the suspicious Iranian population who are loath to foreign meddling.<sup>70</sup> Likewise, the regime has proven remarkable resilient through almost 30 years of sanctions and isolation. There have been significant movements for change within the country from the presidency of Mohammad Khatami to a disaffected youth movement.<sup>71</sup> The constitutional arrangement, represented in Figure 6, of the government is such that multiple checks and balances and redundant institutions makes the concentration of power (which could threaten the Supreme Leader's power) in any single part of the government extremely difficult.<sup>72</sup> The structuring of government makes reform

extremely difficult, as was the case during Khatami's presidency. Mahmoud Ahmadinejad and his radical supporters swept to power in 2005 because of the voter disillusionment with the absence of reform.<sup>73</sup> Since then, the regime has systematically cracked down on secular and civil society organizations.<sup>74</sup>

External regime change is still possible. Despite Iranian military modernization, America's military might would defeat Iran's military much like it did Iraq's.<sup>75</sup> If forced regime change is the desire of US policy, it is a course of action that should be decided upon and enacted rapidly, before Iran can make any further developments to its nuclear capabilities that may preclude such action. Unfortunately, the aftermath of such action would be far worse than it was in Iraq based on Iran's terrain, its people, and the massive US commitment such an action requires. Iran's rugged terrain is ideally suited for a well-orchestrated insurrection. Iran's terrain also limits surgical military strikes against key infrastructure such as covert nuclear facilities<sup>76</sup> much harder. Iran is far more populous than Iraq.<sup>77</sup> Unlike the citizens of Iraq, Iran's population would not welcome Americans as liberators. Quelling unrest after forced regime change would require a commitment beyond that of Iraq and Afghanistan combined. With America's all-volunteer military already stretched thin, a larger commitment would require a national mobilization that would be unacceptable to the American public unless it was attacked or felt immediately threatened. Because of the NIE, it would be extremely difficult to convince the world that Iran is an imminent threat. The United States would have to act unilaterally causing its own isolation from the international community.

If neither regime change nor revolution is likely, options perhaps containment is more plausible. Containment would involve further economic and military sanctions. Targeted sanctions will limit Iran's ability to develop nuclear weapons in the short term as is suggested

by the NIE.<sup>78</sup> Currently there are two sets of UN sanctions in place against Iran.<sup>79</sup> In February, the permanent members of the UN Security Council and Germany met to reach an agreement on further punitive sanctions against Iran's financial and industrial sectors, although Russia and China resisted any additional sanction that may impede their trade with Iran on the grounds of the NIE.<sup>80</sup> There is little reason to believe that sanctions will have their intended effect of limiting Iran's nuclear ambitions or cause the regime to crumble. Rather, in recent history we have seen sanctions have the opposite of their intended purpose as with Iraq during the 1990s.<sup>81</sup>

Containment, because of the unlikelihood of sanctions actually leading to the attainment of US policy goals, requires the United States partner with the Arab nations in the Gulf, namely Iraq and Saudi Arabia, to create a balance of power to offset Iran's growing power. This would require a significant U. S. military presence in the region in the near term until America's allies in the region are strong enough to contain the Iranian threat on their own. Containment would encourage brinkmanship and would destabilize the region as with recent naval incidents in the Gulf.<sup>82</sup> It is reasonable to believe that in a "Gulf Cold War"<sup>83</sup> that such incidents could easily lead to a major regional conflict. Furthermore, such a balance of power arrangement would erase any reason for Iran to willingly give up its nuclear ambitions. Although not the most preferred option, containment may be the only option if the Iranian regime is unwilling to negotiate in good faith about changing its behaviors. If this is the case, American access to bases in Iraq will be critical.

Another option is that of engagement. If the Iranian regime is willing to do so, then engagement, the long-term process that leverages all instruments of national power towards achieving strategic goals. Many Americans consider open engagement as unacceptable because it would be making concessions to a rogue regime.

Perhaps another option is that of a measured engagement that balances negotiations with containment in order to achieve American policy goals. These goals in the case of Iran are its verifiable compliance with non-proliferation of nuclear weapons, the renunciation of terrorism, and an end to covert action in Iraq. This option is the most likely option to bring about the realization of American policy goals while deescalating tensions in the region and being acceptable to the American people.

Although it may seem that Iran's regime is not inclined to negotiate honestly with the United States, there is reason to believe that Iran would be willing to abandon its rogue behavior, conduct honest negotiations, and abide by any agreement. Ambassador level meetings have been taking place with regards to the situation in Iraq.<sup>84</sup> These meeting have to be expanded to include larger security issues. If Tehran is unwilling to continue negotiations, the United States can apply leverage to the regime by challenging the regime's own rhetoric of strength.

Once at the negotiation table, the Iranians are likely rational and pragmatic players. Although the complexities of negotiations that result from the disparate nature of Iranian diplomacy can be frustrating, the end result is often a deliberate and rational decision.<sup>85</sup> Throughout its history, the Islamic Republic of Iran's foreign policy has tended to be fairly pragmatic. Iran has fought wars with its Muslim neighbors and has even sided with non-Muslims against its co-religionists in Azerbaijan and China.<sup>86</sup> Similarly, although Westerners are familiar with the bellicose rhetoric of Iran's radical president, the reality is that the Supreme Leader has severely limited the president's power to carry out foreign policy.<sup>87</sup> In part, this is due to the fact that two of the three main ideological groups in Iranian politics actually favor improved relations with the West, if their rhetoric is to be believed.<sup>88</sup> Lastly, the NIE has essentially "burst Iran's



nuclear bubble".<sup>89</sup> Their main bargaining chip has been exposed as a fake; they are unlikely to get a better deal then right now for essentially nothing in return than at any time in the future.

Having established what are the policy goals of the United States and that the Iranian most likely would negotiate pragmatically, it is important to consider what their desires would be. Above all else, the rulers of Iran are concerned primarily with staying in power. Hence, our first diplomatic step must be to reassuring the regime that the United States will abide by the Algiers Agreement<sup>90</sup> and not interfere in Iran's internal politics as long as the Iranians are willing to change their behavior. To further reassure Iran that America's intentions are not aggressive, the United States needs to affirm that it has no intention of splitting Iran into smaller parts. Not to do so is to condemn any negotiations to failure. US diplomats can show their sincerity by negotiating with Iran openly and treating them as equal partners, nor as miscreants in need of disciplining. Such actions would increase the regime's sense of security and increase its legitimacy in the eyes of its own people and the international community. They would also give credence to America's desire for regional security maintained locally for the benefit of the entire region and the world community. With strong partners in the region, America could scale its physical presence to support its diplomatic efforts.

Economic benefits must be provided once honest compliance has begun to be verified. Based on experiences with Iraq and North Korea, this is one of the most difficult parts of any measured engagement and will require incentives to be incremental in a *quid pro quo* arrangement. Economic benefits should be such that they benefit the Iranian people but do not threaten the regime. Iran's lackluster economy is creating an ever-expanding population of marginalized, unemployed youths that are a potential threat to this regime's stability.<sup>91</sup> Incentives to help Iran's economy should start by allowing Iran to expand the markets for its

petroleum exports.<sup>92</sup> Then American technology could be utilized to help Iran reduce its dependence on foreign oil refinement<sup>93</sup> while expanding the use of renewable energy sources to increase the amount of petroleum available for sale on to the global market. America must be willing to advocate Iran's expansion into the regional and global marketplace and help Iran increase foreign investment. In particular, the United States should encourage other Gulf nations to invest in Iran. Expanding Iran's economic interdependence within the Gulf would support security in the region. As their economy grows and the standards of living go up, Iran would need to attract more investment and to create further growth that would force its economy and government towards the "Washington standard" with its emphasis on transparency and the rule of law.<sup>94</sup> The potential exists for creating an ever-expanding cycle of increased expectations and reforms.

In this way, a measured engagement does not have to mean abandoning America's values of supporting democracy. Increased prosperity and foreign investment will allow Iranians greater access to the outside world through satellite television, the internet and cultural exchange,<sup>95</sup> which would increase its reception to a democratic message coming from the developed world and its neighbors. A successful democracy in Iraq would allow Iranians to see firsthand a real democratic system. Over a million pilgrims, mostly from Iran, visit Iraq's Shiite shrines in the cities of Najaf and Karbala every year.<sup>96</sup> With Iraq's close religious ties to Iran's Shi'a population, the message of democracy in a Muslim nation would certainly resonate with reform-minded Iranians. This fact has caused a great deal of concern among Iran's internal security forces that monitor closely the movements of Iranian coming and going from Iraq.<sup>97</sup> This process of internal reform may not be rapid, but it is a process that once started is difficult to stop. In realistic terms, Iran has the resource welfare to delay a regime collapse almost

indefinitely. That being said, if the United States wants long-term security in the Gulf it must work with the Iranian regime to change its behavior while allowing internal changes to occur at their own pace.

## CONCLUSION

The Persian Gulf region presents a number of complex and difficult questions for US policymakers. It is necessary for the United States to look both in the near and the far term as it continues to shape and mold its policies in the Gulf region. The region's geographic, ideological, and economic significance means that decisions and actions taken today by America's leaders will have major consequences around the globe for decades to come. In the near term, US policy in the region must focus on fulfilling its responsibility to the people of Iraq. America must maintain its presence in Iraq until that government is able to fully stand on its own. Concurrently, the United States needs to strengthen its relationship with Saudi Arabia while working with the Saudi royal family to bring about political and economic reforms that will benefit their people and the region. Helping these two nations grow into viable regional partners is a necessary part of a mid-term measured engagement with Iran to change its actions related to Weapons of Mass Destruction, its role in Iraq, and terrorism. The long-term goal for the region is security and peace. To attain this goal, US policy must be balanced, feasible, and supportable for the United States and the global community. The spread of democracy is part of realizing the endstate of a free and prosperous Gulf region, but it must be understood that the process of spreading democracy will be slow. The people in the countries of the Gulf region must decide for themselves that democracy is the form of government that they desire if it is to succeed.

## NOTES

- <sup>1</sup> *The Middle East*, 11th ed, (Washington: CQ Press, 2007), 128.
- <sup>2</sup> David Rieff, *At the Point of a Gun: Democratic Dreams and Armed Intervention* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2005), 3.
- <sup>3</sup> Ellen Knickmeyer, "Democracy Advocates Disappointed in Bush: Mideast Tour Seen as a Failure to Revive Earlier Emphasis; Economic Woes Grow Urgent," *Washington Post*, January 17, 2008.
- <sup>4</sup> *The Middle East*, 152.
- <sup>5</sup> Tim Niblock, *Saudi Arabia: Power, Legitimacy and Survival* (London: Rutledge, 2006), 2.
- <sup>6</sup> Fred Halliday, *The Middle East in International Relations: Power, Politics and Ideology*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 264.
- <sup>7</sup> Niblock, 2.
- <sup>8</sup> Niblock, 115.
- <sup>9</sup> *National Security Strategy*, 38.
- <sup>10</sup> Moataz A. Fattah, *Democratic Values in the Muslim World* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 2006), 63.
- <sup>11</sup> Fattah, *Democratic Values in the Muslim World*, 9.
- <sup>12</sup> Fattah, *Democratic Values in the Muslim World*, 9; Dr. D. E. Streusand, Lecture given at Marine Corps University March 10, 2008.
- <sup>13</sup> Niblock defines these bases of legitimacy as follows: traditional legitimacy indicates that the right to rule is inherited or passed down from a previous regime; ideological legitimacy stems from a shared belief system, whether political, social, or religious; personal legitimacy flows from the ability of the ruler to effectively govern; eudaemonic legitimacy results from a regime providing for the needs to the populace; and lastly, democratic legitimacy is the results of people determining their government and having a voice in that government (Niblock, 8-13).
- <sup>14</sup> Fattah, *Democratic Values in the Muslim World*, 3.
- <sup>15</sup> Fattah, *Democratic Values in the Muslim World*, 1-5.
- <sup>16</sup> Fattah, *Democratic Values in the Muslim World*, 71.
- <sup>17</sup> Sherifa D. Zuhur, *Iran, Iraq, and the United States: The New Triangle's Impact on Sectarianism and the Nuclear Threat* (Carlisle, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, 2006), 7.
- <sup>18</sup> American politicians of the Democratic Party, from John Kerry to Hillary Clinton, and some Republicans have been calling for the immediate withdrawal of American forces from Iraq since 2004.
- <sup>19</sup> Starting in 750 AD Baghdad was the seat of power for the Islamic empire. It was a center of scientific, philosophical, and religious study. This period ended in thirteenth century when the Mongols conquered Iraq. After which Iraq slid into a decline from which it still recovering. Nonetheless, Iraq was still a focal point of the Shi'a sect and still retains two of its most important shrines. In modern times, its neighbors have overshadowed Iraq. During the 1950s and 1960s, Iraq attempted to be the driving force behind the Arab nationalist movement but was unable to supplant the wealthier and more populace Egypt. Even when Egypt lost its prominence in the Arab world after it made a separate peace with the Israel following the 1973 Yom Kippur War, Baghdad could not wrestle clear leadership of the Ba'athist movement from the Asad regime in Damascus. Under Saddam Iraq fought Iran to a bloody stalemate during the 1980s. Saddam was able to conquer Kuwait in 1990. It was a pyrrhic victory that ended in a crushing defeat and a decade and a half of strangling sanctions (Bernard Lewis, *The Crisis of Islam* (New York: Random, 2003), 52-60; Malise Ruthven, *Islam in the World* (New York: Oxford, 1984), 128, 144, 216, 339; *The Middle East*, 266; Rieff, 185-6).
- <sup>20</sup> *The Middle East*, 264.
- <sup>21</sup> Zuhur, 10.
- <sup>22</sup> Reuel Marc Gerecht, "Will Iran Win the Iraq War?" *Wall Street Journal*, December 14, 2007, <http://www.proquest.com/>.
- <sup>23</sup> *The Middle East*, 274.
- <sup>24</sup> Fattah, *Democratic Values in the Muslim World*, 102.
- <sup>25</sup> On February 21, 2008 Turkish troops invaded northern Iraq in an effort to stop Kurdish insurgent from making cross-border incursions into Turkey (Anonymous, "Turkey Invades Northern Iraq," *The Economist*, vol. 386, iss. 8569 (March 1, 2008): 63, <http://www.proquest.com/>).
- <sup>26</sup> El-fatih A. Abdel Salam, "A Typology of Conflicts and Conflict Resolution in the Muslim World," *Peace Research*, vol. 38, iss. 1 (May 2006): 9-29, <http://www.proquest.com/>.

<sup>27</sup> Building an industrial infrastructure will have to be a long-term process as there is very little manufacturing or industry existing in Iraq. Considering the state of industrial development forty years ago in east and Southeast Asia such a transformation is not impossible.

<sup>28</sup> Niblock, 114, 124, 138.

<sup>29</sup> Reuters, "Baghdad says talks on U.S./Iraq pact to begin soon," February 4, 2008, [www.proquest.com](http://www.proquest.com).

<sup>30</sup> Reuters, "Baghdad says talks on U.S./Iraq pact to begin soon."

<sup>31</sup> The United States and its coalition partners currently operate in Iraq under U.N. Resolution 1546 of 8 June 2004 that must be extended yearly. It is believed the next extension, if not the current extension enacted in December 2007 will be the last (Reuters, "Iraq would seek extended U.N. Mandate if Necessary," February 5, 2008, [www.proquest.com](http://www.proquest.com); *Resolution 15467 (2004) Adopted by the Security Council at its 4987th meeting on 8 June 2004*, <http://www.reliefweb.int/rw/RWB.NSF/db900SID/HMYT-65GRJN?OpenDocument> (accessed on March 11, 2008))

<sup>32</sup> If the situation in the regions deteriorates to the point that the US intervention/invasion of Iran is necessary, access to air and land bases would significantly increase the ability of US forces to forcibly enter Iran. Without this access, any forcible entry into Iran would have to be via airborne or amphibious forces. The latter would be almost completely limited to entering Iran from the North Arabian Sea as forcing the Straits of Hormuz would be nearly impossible against a determined defense. This would significantly reduce the amount of area the Iranian would have to defend while preventing US forces from achieving operational surprise.

<sup>33</sup> Wahhabi Islam is generally thought of as a fundamentalist interpretation of Islam that stresses purging the Islamic community of anything relating to polytheism or not expressly prescribed in the Qur'an or the traditions of the Prophet and his companions (Niblock, 23-24).

<sup>34</sup> Niblock 23-24; *The Middle East*, 20.

<sup>35</sup> *The Middle East*, 129.

<sup>36</sup> Niblock, 5, 167; James Risen and David Johnston, "Report on 9/11 Suggest a Role by Saudi Spies," *New York Times*, August 2, 2003, <http://query.nytimes.com/gst/fullpage.html?res=9E04E3DB133EF931A3575BC0A9659C8B63> (accessed on March 11, 2008).

<sup>37</sup> From 2003 through 2006 fought a number of pitched battles with the forces of Al-Qa'ida that have resulted in around 150 Saudi deaths and over 100 terrorists killed (*The Middle East*, 130).

<sup>38</sup> There have been three separate Saudi states ruled by the same family starting in the late eighteenth century. The third state is generally thought of as starting in 1902 under 'Abd al-'Aziz and adopted the formal name of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in 1932 (Niblock 23-31).

<sup>39</sup> Halliday, 198; Niblock, 33.

<sup>40</sup> Halliday, 198.

<sup>41</sup> Niblock, 31.

<sup>42</sup> Niblock, 138.

<sup>43</sup> Niblock, 107, 9.

<sup>44</sup> Niblock, 173.

<sup>45</sup> Fattah, *Democratic Values in the Muslim World*, 89.

<sup>46</sup> Fattah, *Democratic Values in the Muslim World*, 93-94.

<sup>47</sup> Fattah, *Democratic Values in the Muslim World*, 69-70.

<sup>48</sup> Niblock, 4.

<sup>49</sup> Niblock, 73.

<sup>50</sup> It is likely that the Crown Prince, or some other representative of the King, would be appointed to Assembly so that the King would have a conduit through which to propose legislation.

<sup>51</sup> American forces departed the country in 2003 at the request of the Saudi government (Niblock, 167).

<sup>52</sup> Niblock, 120.

<sup>53</sup> In recent years, Iran had attempted to strengthen its position in Palestine by supporting Hamas with material and financing against their Palestinian rivals (Thomas L. Friedman, "Abdullah's Chance," *New York Times*, March 23, 2007, [www.proquest.com](http://www.proquest.com)).

<sup>54</sup> *National Security Strategy*, 19.

<sup>55</sup> Iran possesses ten percent of the world's oil reserves and a sixth of the world's natural gas reserves (*The Middle East*, 152).

<sup>56</sup> *The Middle East*, 277.

<sup>57</sup> Robin Wright, "GAO Report Challenges Effect of Longtime U.S. Sanctions on Iran," *Washington Post*, January 17, 2008, [http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2008/01/07/AR2008010701098\\_2.html](http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2008/01/07/AR2008010701098_2.html) (accessed on February 17, 2008); *The Middle East*, 253; Halliday, 137.

<sup>58</sup> Burns, Robert. "Pentagon Says Ships Harassed by Iran." *WashingtonPost.com*. January 8, 2008. [http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2008/01/07/AR2008010701098\\_2.html](http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2008/01/07/AR2008010701098_2.html) (accessed on February 17, 2008).

<sup>59</sup> Gareth Porter, "U.S.: Rice and Gates Clash over Iran's Role in Iraq," *Global Information Network*, January 3, 2008, <http://www.proquest.com/>.

<sup>60</sup> The assessment was made with high confidence that Iran halted its nuclear weapons program in 2003 ("Iran: Nuclear Intentions and Capabilities," *National Intelligence Estimate*, November 2007, [http://www.dni.gov/press\\_releases/20071203\\_release.pdf](http://www.dni.gov/press_releases/20071203_release.pdf)).

<sup>61</sup> Since the 1990s it is believed that North Korea has been selling missile technology to the Iranian. The latest missile, the Shahab-4 has a potential range of 4000 km (Bruce Bechtol, *Red Rogue: The Persistent Challenge of North Korea*, Washington: Potomac, 2007).

<sup>62</sup> Technically, Khamene'i is the supreme *fiqah* (jurist); the actual most revered scholar would be the *marja'* (*Marja' al-taqlid al-mutlag*), or the most distinguished scholar, who is current considered to be Grand Ayatollah Ali Sistani in Najaf, Iraq. Indeed, many consider Khamene'i a political appointee because he was not the most senior religious scholar in Iran (Zuhur, 18, 40, 45).

<sup>63</sup> Fattah's study found Iranians are the most accepting of democratic institutions, except those Muslims who have spent long periods in either Europe or America; Iranians are also on par with acceptance of democratic norms of other Muslim countries (Fattah, *Democratic Values in the Muslim World*, 104).

<sup>64</sup> The elections in Iran are not free and open as people in the West view them. As seen in Figure 6, the Council of Guardians is a body of twelve members, the Council of Guardians, which is charged with approving legislation and vetting candidates for national elections. The Supreme Leader appoints six of the members of the Council; the Head of the Judiciary, himself appointed by the Supreme Leader, appoints the other six. The Council has the power and does ensure that all candidates represent an extremely narrow ideological point of view. In 2004, the Council refused 8,000 candidates (Mehran Kamrava, "Iranian National-Security Debates: Factionalism and Lost Opportunities," *Middle East Policy*, Vol. 14, no. 2, Summer 2007, 85; *The Middle East*, 249).

<sup>65</sup> Kamrava, 86.

<sup>66</sup> The Assembly of Experts is actually elected by the people, but from only tiny group of eligible religious scholars (Kamrava, 85).

<sup>67</sup> Kamrava, 86.

<sup>68</sup> *The Middle East*, 238.

<sup>69</sup> Three factions dominate Iranian politics: radicals, traditional-conservatives, and reformers. The radicals are revolutionary hardliners with a populist ideology and hold a few key position. Ahmadinejad is a radical. Traditional-conservatives are the largest faction and made up of most of the clerics and middle-class technocrats. They believe in Islamic ideology and mercantile economics. They hold most of the strategic positions within the government. The reformist faction is made up of some clerics, intellectuals, students, and civil servants. The reformists believe in greater democracy, civil society, and closer relations with the West (Kamrava, 84, 88-90).

<sup>70</sup> Suzanne Maloney, "Fear and Loathing in Tehran," *The National Interest*, September/October 2007, 47.

<sup>71</sup> Ali Afshari and H. Graham Underwood, "The Student Movement's Struggle: Iran's Resilient Civil Society," *Journal of Democracy*, Vol 18 no. 4, October 2007, 80-94.

<sup>72</sup> *The Middle East*, 235.

<sup>73</sup> *The Middle East*, 249.

<sup>74</sup> In 2007 the Iranian regime executed at least 100 political prisoners (Akbar Atri, "Solidarity with Iran" *Wall Street Journal*, October 15, 2007, [www.proquest.com](http://www.proquest.com/)).

<sup>75</sup> Gawdat Bahgat, "Iran and the United States: The Emerging Security Paradigm in the Middle East," *Parameters*, Vol. 37, no. 2 (Summer 2007), 8.

<sup>76</sup> *National Intelligence Estimate*, 7.

<sup>77</sup> Iran, at nearly 70 million people, has almost three times the population of Iraq's of around 24 million (*The Middle East*, 236, 262).

<sup>78</sup> The NIE states that Iran's decision to suspend its highly enriched uranium (HEU) production in 2003 was the result of "international scrutiny and pressure" (*National Intelligence Estimate*, 5); Rieff, 200.

<sup>79</sup> Sanctions against Iran requiring them to halt their HEU program and accept international inspections were passed in December 2006 and March 2007 without their compliance (Wright).

<sup>80</sup> Sebastian Abbot, "Iranian President Says Bush Confrontational," *Associated Press*, January 18, 2008, [www.proquest.com](http://www.proquest.com); Sue Fleming, "U.S. Plays Down Chance of Iranian Resolution Soon," Reuters, January 18, 2008, [www.proquest.com](http://www.proquest.com).

<sup>81</sup> The sanctions enacted against Saddam Hussein's regime in Iraq failed to cause that nation to collapse. In fact, it allowed the government to have even greater control over the population and instilling a "siege mentality". Sanction will have little to effect on a regime that has no qualms about watching its own people die for the sake of the despot. (Rieff, 193-6, 200, 204).

<sup>82</sup> Besides incidents near the Straits of Hormuz already described, Iranian naval forces kidnapped 15 British sailors and marines in the northern Persian Gulf in late March 2007 (Anonymous, "Britain Demands Marines' Release," *Northern Echo*, March 27, 2007, <http://www.proquest.com/>).

<sup>83</sup> Zuhur, 6.

<sup>84</sup> To date, Iranian and US officials of meet four time to discuss this topic (Roxanne Saberi, "Mideast: Iran Has Power over Shi'a Militia, Iraqi Leader Says," *Global Information Network*, December 12, 2007, <http://www.proquest.com/>).

<sup>85</sup> Kamrava, 97.

<sup>86</sup> Christopher Hemmer, "Responding to a Nuclear Iran," *Parameters*, Vol 37, no. 3 (Autumn 2007): 47.

<sup>87</sup> The Supreme Leader has created a number of structures to limit the power of the president and to conduct diplomacy that include a Strategic Council for Foreign Relations headed by former Foreign Minister Kamal Kharazi, a Supreme National Security Council headed by Ali Larijani that conducts negotiations regarding Iran's nuclear program, and the head of the Expeditionary Council, former President Ali Rafsanjani, are considered part of the inner circle of decision makers (Kamrava, 97; Bahgat, 7).

<sup>88</sup> Traditional-conservatives and reformist factions both desire improved relations to better Iran's economic position (Kamrava, 95).

<sup>89</sup> Dr. Amin Tarzi, Lecture given at Marine Corps University, February 11, 2008.

<sup>90</sup> The Algiers Agreement of 1981 that ended the hostage crisis included a statement that the United States would not interfere, either directly or indirectly, in the internal affairs of Iran (Maloney, 43).

<sup>91</sup> Based on current figures, Iran's workforce grows by a million new workers but its stagnate economy produces less than 300,000 jobs. The resultant unemployment and disaffection of it young is causing the rates of drug abuse, prostitution, and human trafficking to spiral out of control. The Iranian government reports about 7 million drug addicts are present in Iran and some 100,000 young women have been smuggled to neighboring countries presumably for the sex trade. (Afshari and Underwood, 84.)

<sup>92</sup> In accordance with the Iran-Libya Sanctions Act (ILSA) of 2001, US companies are not allowed to purchase Iranian petroleum products or invest in Iran (*The Middle East*, 131).

<sup>93</sup> Bhushan Bahree, "How Iran Is Vulnerable to a Decline in Oil Exports," *Wall Street Journal*, February 20, 2007, <http://www.proquest.com/>.

<sup>94</sup> The term *Washington Consensus* refers to those economic and financial concepts espoused by the international financial organizations, such as the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, that include liberal trade practices, fiscal discipline, deregulation, private enterprise, legal mechanisms that protect foreign investors (Niblock, 114).

<sup>95</sup> By allowing more students and workers to experience democracy in the West the thought is that these people would not only accept democratic values, but that on returning to Iran they would work for further reforms within the country. This concept is bore out in Fattah's study that found democracy most accepted by those with over one year of living in the West may be the most influence factor in determining a Muslim's support for democracy. This is opposite the anecdotic cases of Muslims like the 9/11 hijackers and Sayyid Qutb being radicalized in western democracies. (Afshari and Underwood, 92; Fattah, 51-3.)

<sup>96</sup> Alissa J. Rubin, "Iraqi City is Poised to Become a Hub of Shiite Power," *New York Times*, December 16, 2007, <http://www.proquest.com/>.

<sup>97</sup> Zuhur, 28.

## Appendix A

Figure 1. Map of the Persian Gulf Region

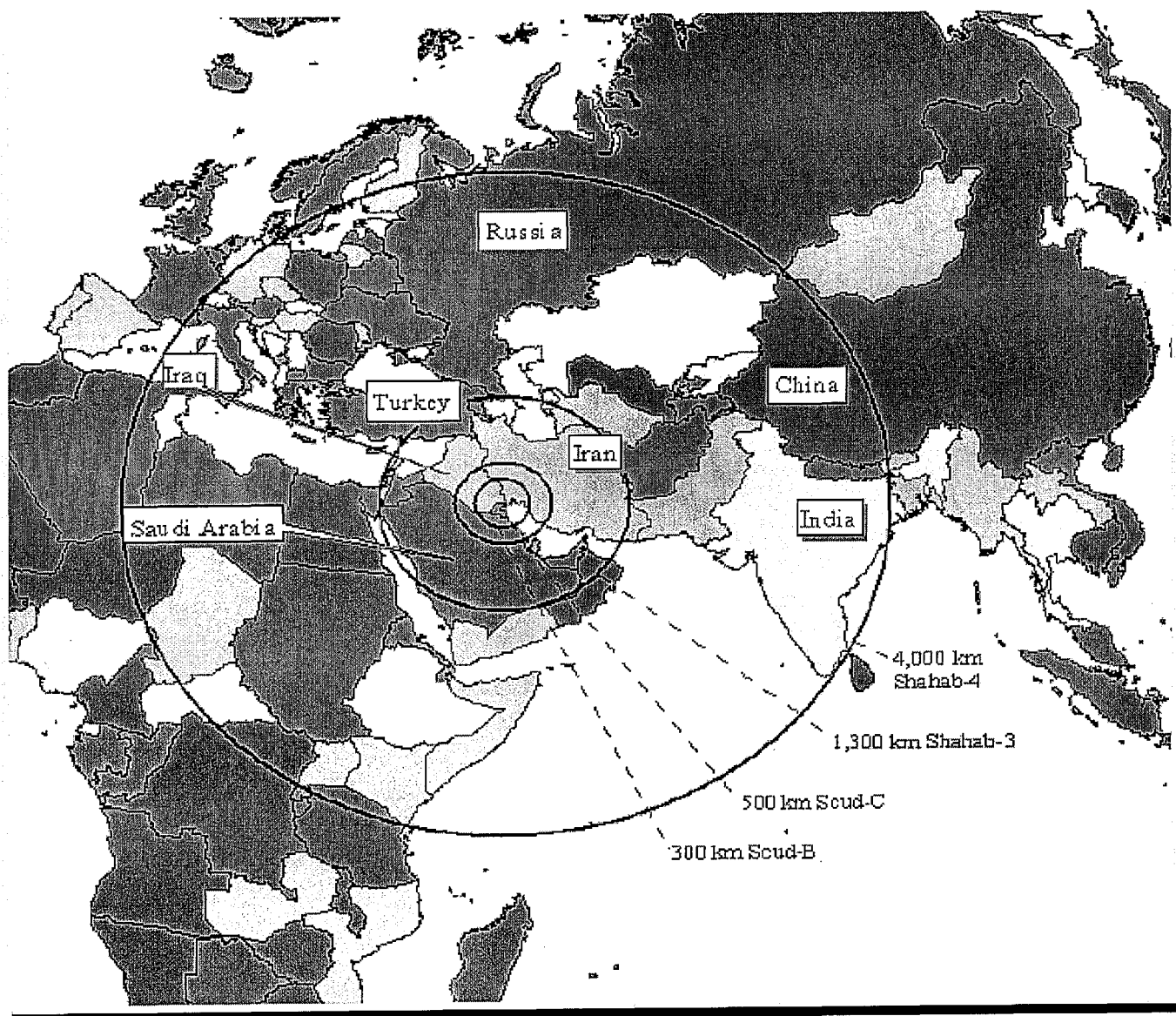


Source: [http://www.atlapedia.com/online/maps/political/Saudi\\_etc.htm](http://www.atlapedia.com/online/maps/political/Saudi_etc.htm)



## Appendix A

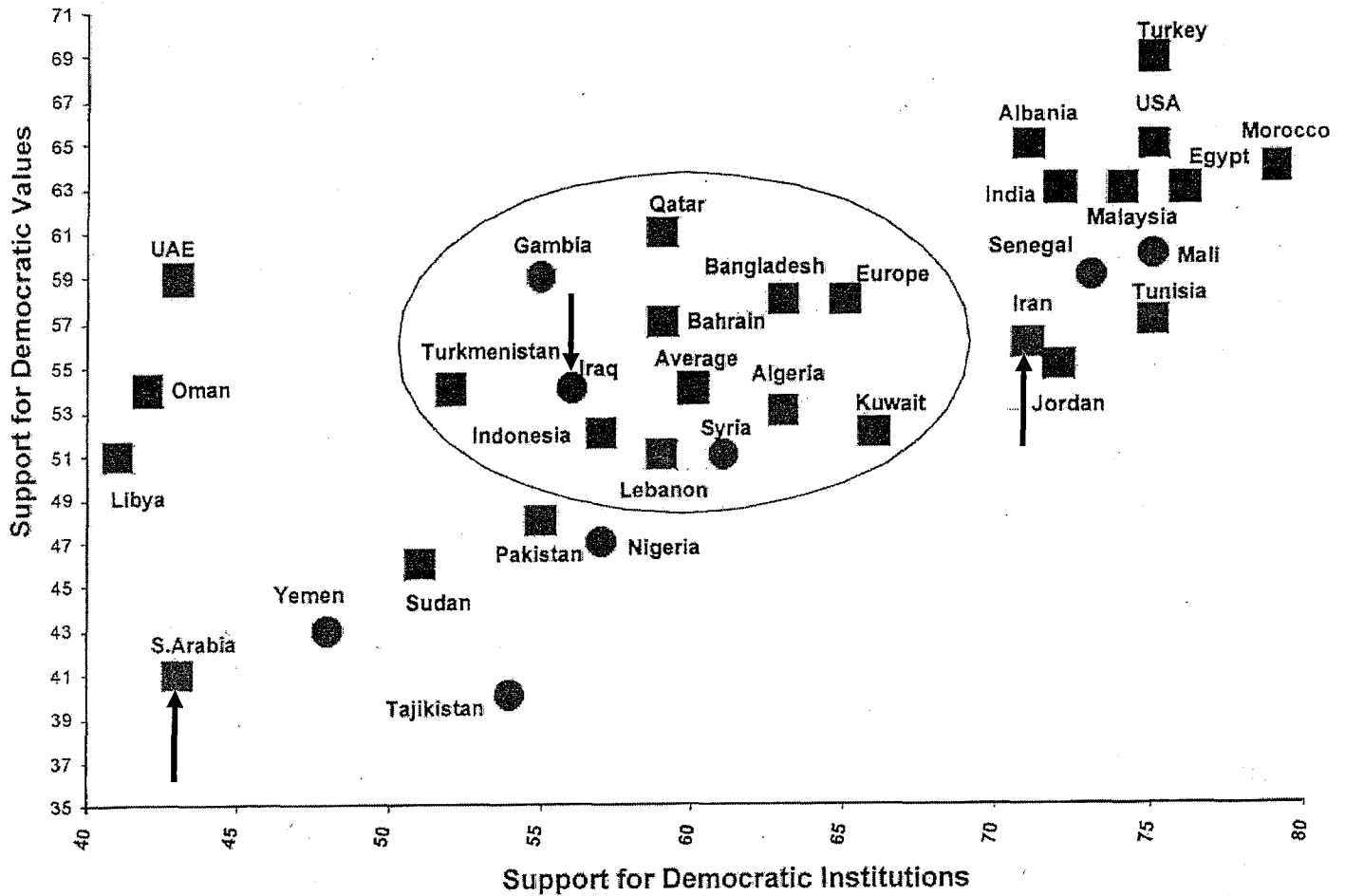
Figure 2. Ranges of Iranian Missiles



Source. Adapted from Bechtol, *Challenges to US Interests in Asia*.

## Appendix A

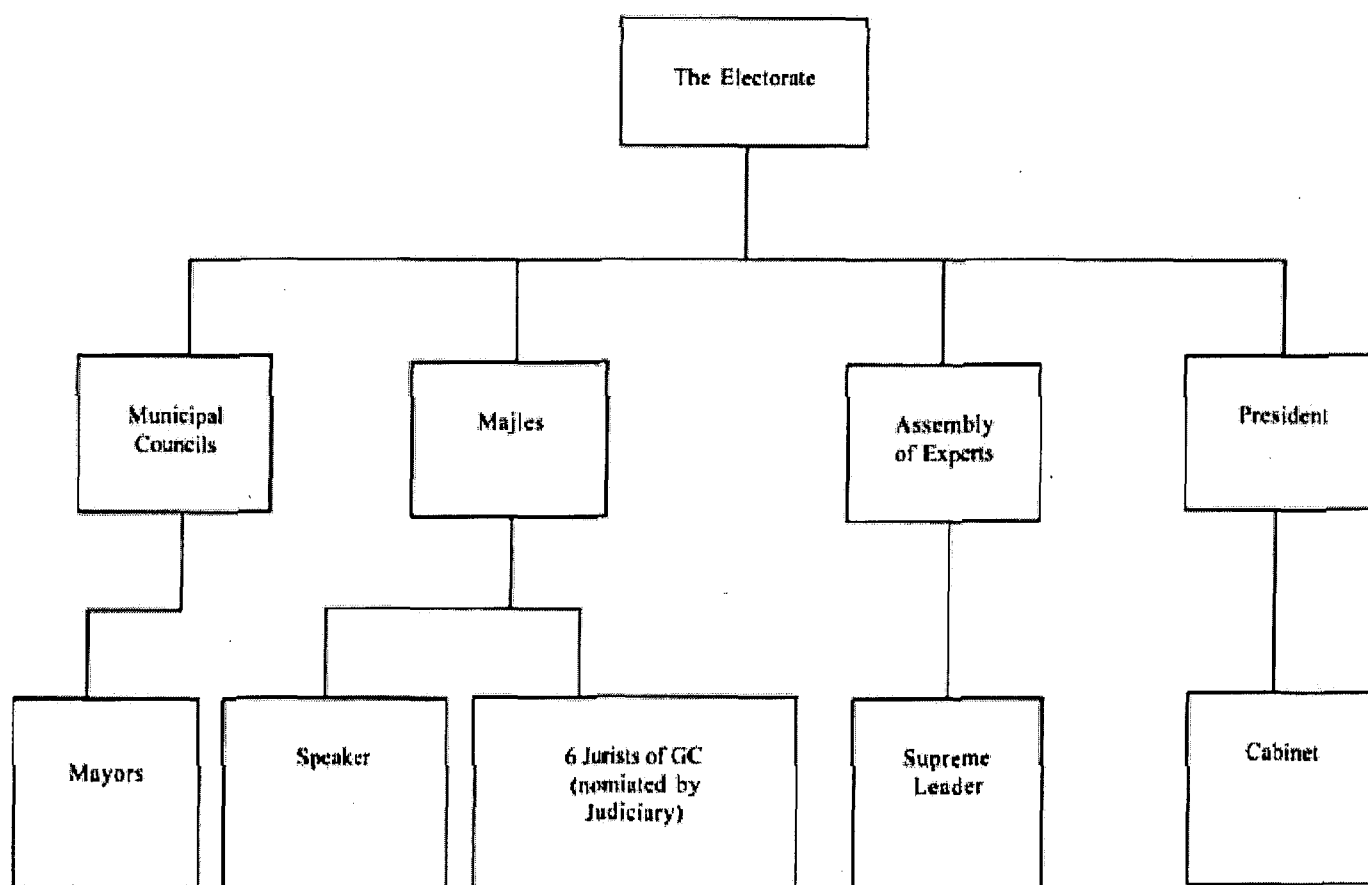
Figure 3. Muslim Support for Democratic Norms and Institutions



Source. Adapted from Fattah, *Democratic Values in the Muslim World*, 89.

## Appendix A

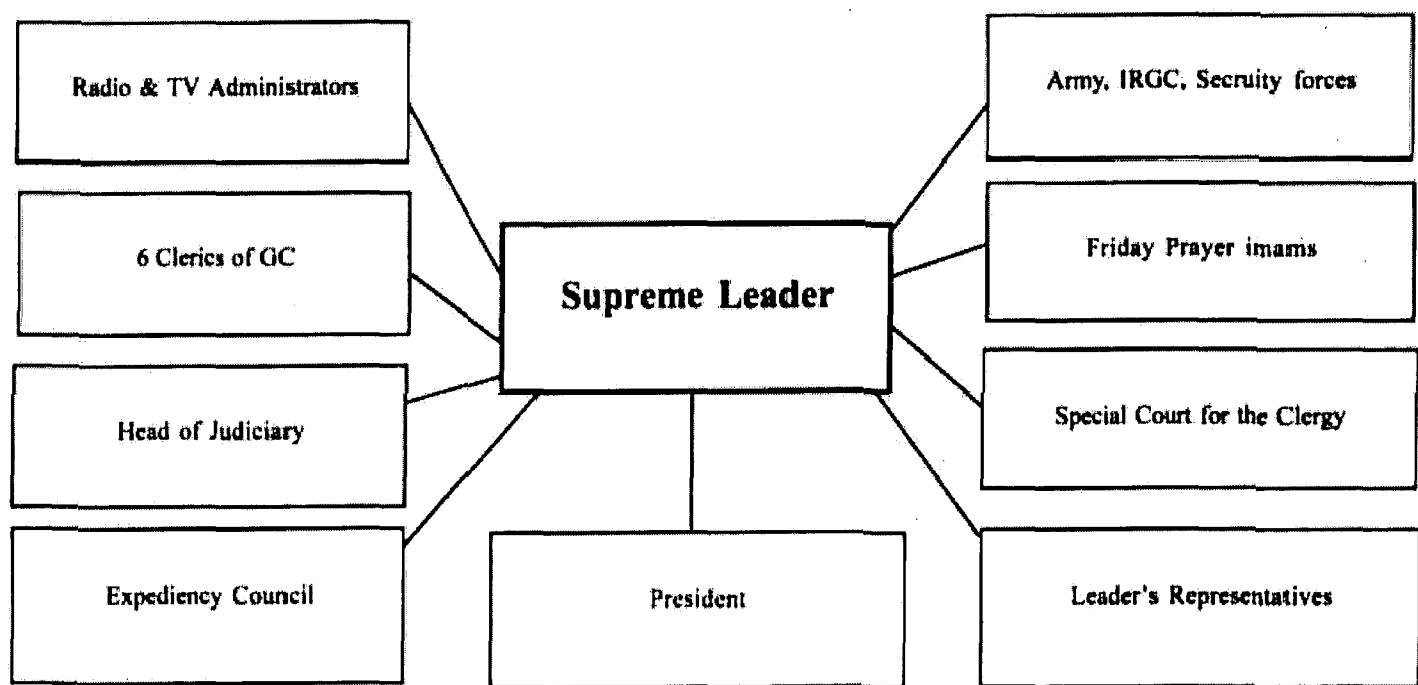
**Figure 4. Theoretical distribution of power within the Islamic Republic of Iran**



Source. Kamrava, 86.

## Appendix A

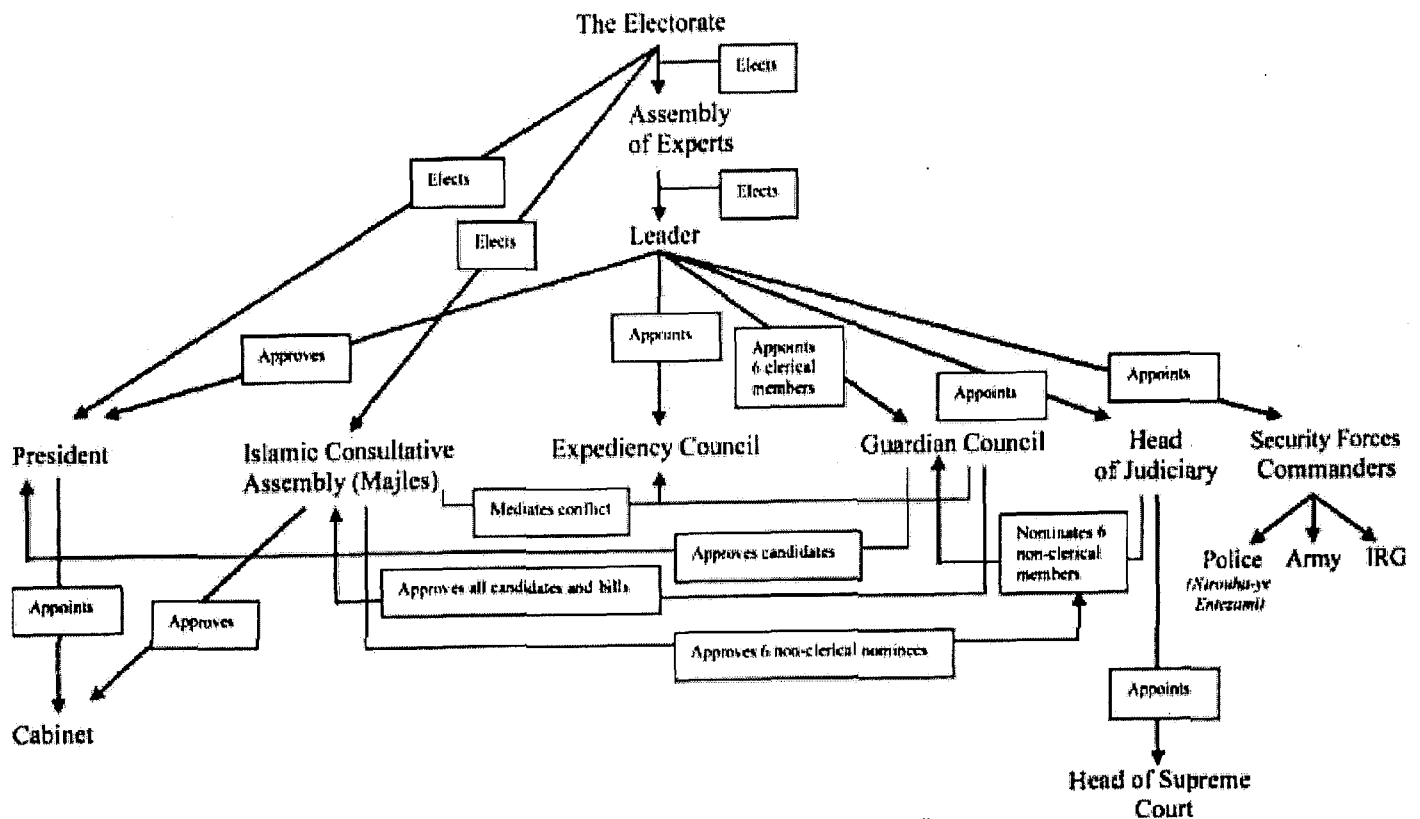
**Figure 5. Actual distribution of power within the Islamic Republic of Iran**



Source. Kamrava, 87.

## Appendix A

Figure 6. Constitutional distribution of power within the Islamic Republic of Iran



Source. Kamrava, 85.

## Appendix B

Table 1. Worldwide Oil and Natural Gas Reserves

Region/Country	Crude Oil <sup>a</sup>		Natural Gas <sup>b</sup>	
	Reserves	Percentage	Reserves	Percentage
North America	213	16.5	265	4.3
Canada	178.8		57	
Mexico	12.9		—	
United States	21.4		193	
Central and South America	103	8.0	251	4.1
Brazil	11.2		—	
Venezuela	79.7		151	
Europe	15	1.2	201	3.3
Netherlands	—		62	
Norway	7.7		84	
Eurasia	79	6.1	1,953	32
Azerbaijan	7		—	
Kazakhstan	9		65	
Russia	60		1,680	
Turkmenistan	—		71	
Uzbekistan	—		66	
Middle East	743	57.5	2,565	42
Iran	132.5		971	
Iraq	115.00		112	
Kuwait	101.5		56	
Qatar	15.2		911	
Saudi Arabia	264.3		241	
United Arab Emirates	97.8		214	
Africa	103	8.0	486	8
Algeria	11.4		161	
Egypt	—		59	
Libya	39.1		—	
Nigeria	35.9		185	
Asia and Oceania	36	2.8	392	6.4
China	18.3		—	
India	5.8		—	
Indonesia	—		98	
Malaysia	—		75	
World Total	1,293		6,112	

Notes: A dash indicates that a nation is not among the top 20 in reserves.  
a. Billions of barrels  
b. Trillion cubic feet

Source: *The Middle East*, 152

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